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The SPECTATOR.

——Tenet inſanabile multos
Scribendi Cacoethes—— Juv.

WEDNESDAY, *Auguſt* 18. 1714.

THERE is a certain Diſtemper, which is mentioned neither by *Galen* nor *Hippocrates*, nor to be met with in the *London Diſpenſary*. *Juvenal*, in the Motto of my Paper, terms it a *Cacoethes*; which is a hard Word for a Diſeaſe called in plain *Engliſh*, *the Itch of Writing*. This *Cacoethes* is as Epidemical as the Small-Pox, there being very few who are not ſeized with it ſome time or other in their Lives. There is however this Difference in theſe two Diſtempers, that the firſt, after having indiſpoſed you for a time, never returns again; whereas this I am ſpeaking of, when it is once got into the Blood, ſeldom comes out of it. The *Britiſh* Nation is very much afflicted with this Malady, and tho' very many Remedies have been applied to Perſons infected with it, few of them have ever proved ſucceſsful. Some have been cauterized with Satyrs and Lampoons, but have received little or no Benefit from them; others have had their Heads faſtened for an hour together between a cleft Board, which is made uſe of as a Cure for the Diſeaſe, when it appears in its greateſt Malignity. There is indeed one kind of this Malady which has been ſometimes removed, like the biting of a *Tarantula*, with the ſound of a muſical Inſtrument, which is commonly known by the Name of a Cat-call. But if you have a Patient of this kind under your Care, you may aſſure your ſelf there is no other way of recovering him effectually, but by forbidding him the Uſe of Pen, Ink and Paper.

But to drop the Allegory before I have tired it out, there is no Species of Scriblers more offenſive, and more incurable, than your Periodical Writers, whoſe Works return upon the Publick on certain Days and

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at ſtated times. We have not the Conſolation in the Peruſal of theſe Authors, which we find at the reading of all others, (namely) that we are ſure if we have but Patience we may come to the End of their Labours. I have often admired a humorous Saying of *Diogenes*, who reading a dull Author to ſeveral of his Friends, when every one began to be tired, finding he was almoſt come to a blank Leaf at the end of it, cried, *Courage, Lads, I ſee Land.* On the contrary, our Progreſs through that kind of Writers I am now ſpeaking of is never at an End. One Day makes work for another, we do not know when to promiſe our ſelves Reſt.

It is a melancholy thing to conſider that the Art of Printing, which might be the greateſt Bleſſing to Mankind, ſhould prove detrimental to us, and that it ſhould be made uſe of to ſcatter Prejudice and Ignorance through a People, inſtead of conveying to them Truth and Knowledge.

I was lately reading a very whimſical Treatiſe, entitled, *William Ramſey*'s Vindication of Aſtrology. This profound Author, among many myſtical Paſſages, has the following one. 'The Abſence of 'the Sun is not the Cauſe of Night, foraſmuch as 'his Light is ſo great that it may illuminate the 'Earth all over at once as clear as broad Day, but 'there are tenebrificous and dark Stars, by whoſe 'Influence Night is brought on, and which do ray 'out Darkneſs and Obſcurity upon the Earth, as the 'Sun does Light.

I conſider Writers in the ſame View this Sage Aſtrologer does the heavenly Bodies. Some of them are Stars that ſcatter Light as others do Darkneſs: I could mention ſeveral Authors who are tenebrificous Stars of the firſt Magnitude, and point out a knott of Gentlemen who have been dull in Conſort, and may be looked upon as a dark Conſtellation. The Nation has been a great while benighted with ſeveral of theſe Antiluminaries. I ſuffered them to ray out their Darkneſs as long as I was able to endure it, till at length I came to a Reſolution of riſing upon them, and hope in a little time to drive them quite out of the *Britiſh* Hemiſphere.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

On Saturday next will be Publiſhed,

Perſian Tales. Vol. 2. Tranſlated from the French by Mr. Philips, Author of the Paſtorals and Diſtreſt Mother. Printed for Jacob Tonſon at Shakeſpear's-Head over-againſt Catherine-ſtreet in the Strand. Where may be had the firſt Vol.

N. B. To prevent Gentlemen's being miſtaken, who have already bought the firſt Vol. this is to inform them, that the Edition of the Perſian and Turkiſh Tales, which is this Day Publiſhed in two Vols. is not Tranſlated by the Same Hand, but by an Unknown Hand.

Any Gentleman that has a Place for Life, whereof he is willing to diſpoſe, about the Value of 1100 l. or 1200 l. may hear of a Chapman enquiring at John's Coffee-houſe in Milk-ſtreet, or the Printer of this Paper. N. B. The Perſon that would purchaſe was bred to the Law.

To Morrow will be Publiſhed,

The Mauſoleum, a Poem, ſacred to the Memory of her late Majeſty Queen Anne, by Mr. Theobald. ----Terras Aſtræa Reliquit. Ov. Met. Price 1s. Printed for Jonas Brown without Temple-Bar. Where may be had a Diſcourſe on the Contemplation of Death, being a Dialogue between a Philoſopher and a Courtier, price 1s. An Index to Intereſt, price 6 s. Dr. Browne's Inſtitutions in Phyſick, price 6s. The Art of Swimming, with Cutts, price 2s. The Danger and Folly of evil Courſes, price 1s. 6d. or 15s. per Dozen. Advice to a Son in the Univerſity, in 2 Parts, by J. Barecroft, D. D. the third Edition. To which is now added Concionatorum Inſtructi, or Rules for Preaching, plainly intimating what Subject, Method, and Stile may be requiſite in that Divine Art, price 1s. 6d. Alſo 13 Sermons by the late Reverend Mr. Piggot, Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Stennett, price 6s.

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Given Gratis, A New Edition of the Practical Scheme of the Secret Diſeaſe, to any one that will but ask for it, at Mr. Lovell's a Toy-ſhop at the Patten againſt Suffolk ſtreet end near Charing Croſs, and at Mr. Garways at the Royal Exchange Gate next Cornhill; by which Perſons may perfectly underſtand their own Caſe, and cure themſelves with a ſmall little thing no bigger than a Pea, without ſlip ſlops of Phyſick, Suſpition, Confinement, or telling their Caſe to any one. Fetch it or ſend for it, twill coſt you nothing but asking for, and is worth any one's reading who either ever were, are now, or are like to be in any venereal Circumſtances whatſoever, and with their own and Poſterities welfare.

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